

Committee: Security Council

Issue: The situation in Afghanistan

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Position: President

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is a landlocked country, located in Southern Asia and bordered by Pakistan and Iran. It has long suffered from power rivalries, foreign interventions and violent domestic insurgency. Beginning with the Anglo-Afghan wars in the nineteenth century, Soviet and American military interventions, civil war, warlordism, governance by the Islamic Taliban and brutal terrorist attacks have followed. Unfortunately, Afghanistan's descent into devastation has not taken any significant turns towards stability and peace.

Indeed, the Taliban home-based insurgent group considers itself the rightful governor of Afghanistan and remains a confident and bold force, carrying out suicide attacks, bombings and heavy assaults, declaring that there will be no peace deals until foreign military forces depart from the country. Meanwhile, jihadist and terrorist groups, who seek to establish an Islamic caliphate, have build a safe haven in Afghanistan and do not hesitate to execute shootings, kidnappings and bombings using improvised explosive devices at the expense of civilians. During 2017, more than 10,000 civilians lost their lives or suffered injuries.¹

It is argued that a stalemate has been reached. However, the imminent 2019 elections could be the start of a new beginning and, with the cooperation and coordination of the international community, Afghanistan could enter a new era of sustainable development and peace.



Figure 1; Map of Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries

¹ "OHCHR | Afghanistan: 10,000 Civilian Casualties in 2017 – UN Report Suicide Attacks and IEDs Caused High Number of Deaths and Injuries." *OHCHR | Convention on the Rights of the Child*, www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22658.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Jihad

Jihad, meaning “struggle” or “battle”, is Muslims’ religious duty to spread Islam by conducting war. The Afghan War is viewed as a jihad, at the beginning against the Soviet Union and Afghanistan’s Marxist government and, then, against the United States, with extremists evoking it as justification for their violent attacks.

Modern Islam focuses on carrying out war with one’s inner self, using it as “a defensive measure when the faith is in danger”².

Taliban

Taliban is a right-wing fundamentalist political and religious faction that came to prominence in Afghanistan in 1994, following the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the collapse of the Communist regime. The faction’s popularity can be attributed to their success in suppressing corruption, fighting lawlessness and making the regions under their control safe, their promise to the public being to restore peace and security and enforce a hardline version of the Islamic law.

In recent years the Taliban are the most vigorous insurgent group in the region, being even stronger in Pakistan, where the distinction between Taliban factions and militant groups is not explicit.

Mujahid-Mujahideen

The term is lexicographically connected with jihad and it means “those who engage in war”. It refers to the self-named Afghan mujahideen, the guerrilla fighters who battled the Soviet army from 1979 – 1989. They came from mountainous rural areas and maintained bases in Pakistan, receiving arms through Pakistan and Iran. They were independent of the government, being under the command of tribal leaders, not waging jihad but “fighting a nationalistic war against occupiers”³.

Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K)

² “Jihad.” *Britannica School*, school.eb.co.uk/levels/advanced/article/jihad/43635.

³ Zalman, Amy. “Mujahideen.” *ThoughtCo*, ThoughtCo, www.thoughtco.com/definition-of-mujahideen-3209246.

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The Islamic State's - also known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/Levant (ISIS/ISIL) - extension in the Khorasan province, a jihadist entity established in 2014 with the aim of creating an Islamic caliphate.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda is a “militant Islamist organization founded by Osama Bin Laden in the late 1980s”. At the beginning, it supported “Muslims fighting against the Soviet Union during the Afghan War and then it came under the patronage of the Taliban militia”⁴. Its goal is to eject Western influence, unite all Muslim countries and establish an Islamic caliphate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Afghan history is characterised by a number of subsequent breakdowns in civil order ignited by both external powers and internal extremities, along with expansionary and influential aspirations.

Modern Afghanistan

In the late 19th century, Afghanistan had the role of a buffer state between the British Indian Empire and the tsarist Russian Empire, being used to secure frontiers during the Great Game. After two Anglo-Afghan Wars, in 1919, following the third war, Afghanistan was emancipated from the British influence and independence was declared. From 1933 a monarchy that lasted for four decades was established in Afghanistan.

In 1947, Afghanistan tapped into the opportunity of Indian Independence - which resulted in the creation of two new states; India and Pakistan - to reassert their historic claim over some tribal territories across the Durand Line, “including in North West Frontier Province and the city of Peshawar,”⁵ which were ostensibly now part of Pakistan. The government also rejected Pakistan’s membership application in the UN, and consequently Britain named Pakistan as its successor state in the tribal areas and the Durand Line remains a bone of contention even today.

⁴ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Al-Qaeda.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 10 May 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda.

⁵ “The End Game: Britain's Role in Afghanistan 1947–50.” *History Extra*, 20 Jan. 2018, www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/the-end-game-britains-role-in-afghanistan-1947-50/.

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In the Cold War, the United States decided to side with Pakistan, a decision that enabled the Soviet premier to sign an arms and trade deal with Afghanistan in 1955.

The Republic of Afghanistan

In 1964 constitutional monarchy was introduced, though polarisation of national politics occurred, hence this brief foray into democracy ended with a coup d'etat in 1973. Afghanistan was declared a republic and the regime, aiming for distance from Soviet and American dependency, was but democratic. At this point, the two PDPA organizations, after a decade of separation, reunited against this centrist government and with a Communist counter-coup in 1978, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was born in April 1978.

Communist phase

Power was now shared between the two PDPA Parties and Nur Mohammad Taraki was elected president of the Revolutionary Council. The espoused policies were founded on Afghan nationalism, Islamic ideals, socio-economic justice and political neutrality in foreign affairs, denouncing Soviet influence. Nevertheless, unity between the factions was only temporary, as the People's Party gained dominance and purges of Banner members or others who might oppose the regime took place. The regime's communist and pro-Soviet character abased the Afghan culture, thus the population responded with rather uncoordinated revolts. The main goal of the government, to achieve freedom from the American influence, was accomplished on February 1979, when the US Ambassador Dubs was killed, and therefore the elimination of American support to Afghanistan was guaranteed.

Infights sprung up and Taraki was overthrown by the leader of the People's Party. Contrary to his predecessor, he tried to broaden the base of support and lure back Pakistan's and the United States' interest to Afghan security. At this point, the Soviet Army marched on to Kabul, and the US decided to support financially and militarily the mujahideen groups, triggering guerilla warfare. However, on December 1979, the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan a communist government was propped up and by 1980 the Banner leader Karmal was installed as ruler. Opposition against the Soviets was intensified, with mujahideen groups now enjoying assistance not just by the US, but by Pakistan, China, Iran and Saudi Arabia as well, who supplied them with money and arms. It was the Pakistani military Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate (ISI) that assumed the responsibility of funnelling the funds and the weapons to the Afghan resistance. Meanwhile, Karmal was replaced by Najibullah as head of the Soviet-backed regime.

As the mujahideen groups pushed to overthrow Najibullah, their fight sponsored and joined coreligionist volunteers from across the Muslim world. Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian who funded mujahideen activities, was among them.

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The effects of the continuous friction between the Banner and People's parties were felt in the neighbouring Iran and Pakistan, as there were more than five million Afghan refugees. At a subsequent time, talks between the foreign ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan were held in Geneva under the aegis of the UN and peace accords were finally signed in 1988. By 1989 the Soviets and the British had withdrawn troops and had left Afghanistan. Nonetheless, Afghanistan immediately slipped into a civil quagmire.

Civil War, Taliban phase

During the first phase of the civil war (1989-1992) the Soviet Union continued to support the Kabul government and a coalition, built mainly of the mujahideen parties that had fought the communists, created a fragile interim government. Najibullah was ousted from power in April 1992, and political turmoil expressed most violently rendered international aid essential.

During the second phase of the war (1992-1996) Afghanistan was ruled by militia leaders and warlords. Partially in response to this, the Taliban emerged in 1994. Soon they established an Islamic Emirate, introducing an uncompromising interpretation of Islam. In 1997 they were recognized as legitimate rulers by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but were denied Afghanistan's seat at the UN, and had under their influence approximately the two-thirds of the country.

In 1998, the US launched missile strikes at Bin Laden, who was suspected of organizing a global terrorist network, and the continuous Taliban refusal to extradite him, led the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to adopt Resolution 1267, creating the "al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee", which recognized the two groups as terrorist entities and imposed sanctions on them. In 2001, the commander of the Northern Alliance, the main anti-Taliban coalition, was assassinated by al-Qaeda operatives.

Struggle for democracy

Blame for terrorist attacks carried out against the US, on September 11 was centered on al-Qaeda. The American President Bush called on the Taliban regime to deliver all the leaders of al-Qaeda, but due to the lack of response, the US and Britain launched an intensive bombing campaign against the Taliban and provided support to Northern Alliance forces to push the regime to yield to their demands. The Taliban eventually surrendered Kandahar, "the militia's base of power".

With the subsequent fall of Kabul, the UN organised the sign of the Bonn Agreement by major Afghan anti-Taliban factions, endorsed by UNSC's Resolution 1383. The agreement, installing Karzai as interim administration head and creating an international peacekeeping force to maintain security in Kabul, was followed by the establishment of the International Security

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Assistance Force “ISAF.”⁶ via the UNSC Resolution 1386.⁷ This administration held power until 2004, when a new constitution was approved and democratic elections, in which women were granted the right to vote, were held, Karzai being elected president.

Shortly thereafter legislative elections were held, for the first time in more than three decades, and in 2005 the newly elected National Assembly convened its first session. In parallel, violence between the US-led coalition and the Taliban forces escalated and therefore NATO troops came to replace the US-led coalition and stepwise assume control of international military operations across the entire country. Now it was against NATO forces that the Taliban were fighting, and the civilian casualties in 2008 reached their peak since the beginning of the war. Meanwhile, the new US President Obama sent that additional troops.

Political agitation was caused by long overdue elections, though as soon as they are held in 2009 complaints of fraud were born. The UN-backed Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) ordered a review of suspect polling stations and eventually ruled that the fraudulent activity is pervasive enough to invalidate a number of votes. In re-elections Karzai was inaugurated.

The unpopularity of the Afghan central government and NATO among Afghans, and the presence of a safe haven provided by Pakistan to Taliban were two factors that fuelled the insurgency and its resilience. In order to strengthen the counter-insurgency strategy, Obama increased the number of troops in the region and the number of NATO troops were peaked as well. Even though the Taliban forces receded, militants kept attacking military, government and civilian targets.

Security Transition

In October 2011, the US war in Afghanistan marked its tenth anniversary and it was by all appearances, coming to an end. At a summit in Lisbon, the NATO Member States signed a declaration agreeing to hand over full responsibility for security in Afghanistan to Afghan forces by the end of 2014. The transition process began with local security forces assuming control in rather stable regions. When Bin Laden was killed, Obama called for a drawdown of US troops deployed in Afghanistan. In view of reconciliation, the UNSC

⁶ “A Timeline of the U.S. War in Afghanistan.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan.

⁷ “A Timeline of the U.S. War in Afghanistan.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan.

released a sanctions list between members of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, facilitating the addition and removal of entities.

In spite of that, at the Bonn Conference, where the international community gathered once again to devise a blueprint for the Afghan transition to a self-sustaining government, the objectives were not achieved. Pakistan refused to be present and the insurgency still raged. International support was expressed with the pledge of \$16 billion in civilian aid to Afghanistan by Tokyo and with US, Japan, Germany and UK supplying funds too.

In 2014 the American and British ended their combat operations in the country. NATO formally ended its 13-year combat mission in Afghanistan too, however, because violence still persisted, it organised a follow-on mission "Resolute Support" in an effort to provide further training and support for Afghan security forces.

The situation degenerated, as the Islamic State (IS) group emerged, managing to attain Taliban-controlled areas in the province. More than one million Afghans were forced to repatriate. Amid resurgence, Obama delayed the troop withdrawal, following a request from the Afghan President and eventually ordered them to remain in the region until 2017. Similarly, NATO extended its Support mission, maintained troop numbers and reiterated a funding pledge until 2020.

Escalation

On 2017, there was a rise on IS activity, therefore the US military dropped the largest non-nuclear bomb it has ever used in combat, hitting the ISIS group, also killing its new leader in Afghanistan that year. The Taliban

militants carried out a series of bold and gory terror attacks and captured the region that was formerly used as a base by Bin Laden. The American administration of Trump implemented a new Afghanistan plan, deploying troops across rural Afghanistan, launching airstrikes in efforts to decimate Taliban's finances and interrupting security assistance to Pakistan.

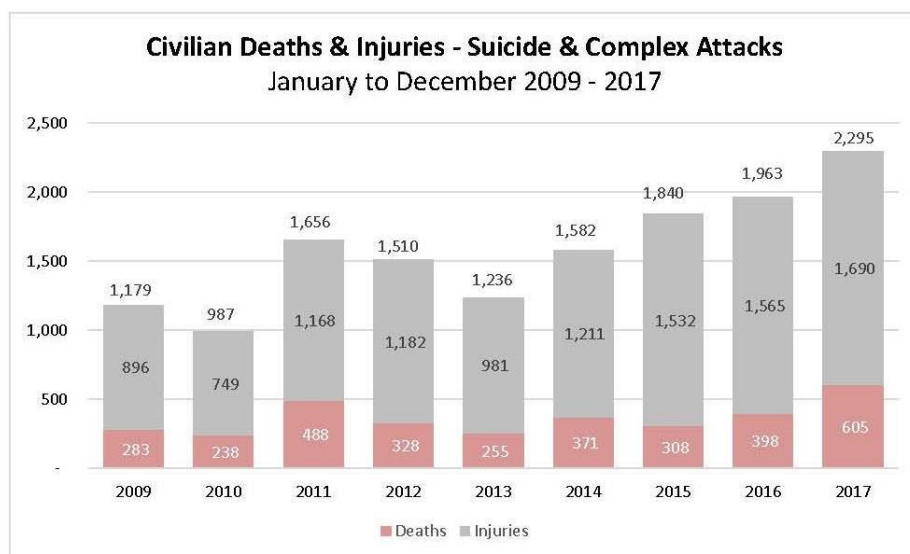


Figure 2; UN Report Suicide Attacks and IEDS Caused High Number of Deaths and Injuries

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Pakistan

Pakistan has long been a disruptive neighbour for Afghanistan, seeking leverage in the country and cultivating radical groups within Afghanistan as proxies. Pakistan has always been ensnared in, while at the same time augmenting, Afghanistan's instability, as it wants to prevent both the establishment of a strong Afghan government that is closely aligned with India, as it potentially contribute to the encirclement of Pakistan, and the continuation of Afghan instability, since it is used as a safe haven for anti-Pakistan militant groups and a perilous battleground for outside powers. Accordingly, Pakistan is one of the only three states- along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - that recognised the Taliban when they were in power in Afghanistan, and the last one to break diplomatic ties with them.

It should be highlighted that the Afghan Taliban metastasized in neighbouring Pakistan, forming the Pakistani Taliban, or Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP). The TTP does not strive for political legitimacy but has expressed commitment to what they see as proper implementation of the holy jihad. Their propaganda and war are pointed towards the Pakistani government, accusing them of conspiring to sterilize Muslims and fighting against girls' education.

United States of America (USA)

During the Afghan civil war, the USA was one of the countries that supported financially the mujahideen fighters against the government. However the

american military has been officially engaged in Afghanistan since 2001, the Afghan War being the longest war for the USA.

The Afghan-American bilateral partnership is guided by agreements (SPA and BSA) which lay out mutual economic and political commitments and security understandings. In 2012, Obama designated Afghanistan a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA).

It is important to note that the USA has been struggling to monitor the American equipment once it enters the possession of Afghan policemen and soldiers. Particularly, insurgents and Taliban obtain equipment such as vehicles through violent raids to impersonate Afghan and Western soldiers. Also, IS fighters have launched direct assaults on American commandos to steal

U.S. Assistance to Pakistan (October 2001–September 2013)



Source: Congressional Research Service

Figure 3; US assistance to Pakistan from 2001 to 2013

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weapons, with American operations losing machine guns and rocket launchers to the insurgents in a firefight in 2016⁸.

Recently, the Trump administration stated that the US will keep supporting the Afghan government through bringing reforms and confronting corruption.

Russian Federation (former Soviet Union)

There are two vibrant events that have been engraved on the Afghan-Russian relations. Firstly, the Soviet Union's contribution to the socio-economic reforms and major infrastructure projects still visible in the country. Secondly, the occupation of 1979, when the Soviet Red Army invaded Kabul and installed rulers, as it added a heavy political dimension to friendly relations. A communist phase followed in Afghanistan until 1989, when the Soviets withdrew their troops. The "goal from then onward was not helping the Afghan state, but finding allies who could offer the Russians leverage to secure their interest", hence Russia remains a visible player in Afghans politics⁹.

Newly, the Russian diplomacy embraced the Taliban, the former nemesis of IS to exchange information about the terrorist group, a big threat to the Russian interests. An active Afghan policy is adopted because it extends Russia's role in Central Asia and it prevents its marginalisation from China, maintaining thus influence across the region of Greater Eurasia.

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)

People's Democratic Party is the major Afghan leftist organisation, a political party, formed in the period of constitutional reform in Afghanistan (1963–1973). Although its ideology, could be characterized as national democratic and progressive, after 1978, the party became openly Marxist, with strong Leninist tendencies.

By 1965 it had split into two factions; the Khalq (People) faction, dominated by "Pashto-speaking Afghans from outside of Kabul and had strong ties to the military"¹⁰, and the Parcham (Flag) faction, dominated by Persian-speaking Afghans from Kabul.

⁸ Bodetti, Austin. "How the US Is Indirectly Arming the Taliban." *The Diplomat*, The Diplomat, 15 June 2018, thediplomat.com/2018/06/how-the-us-is-indirectly-arming-the-taliban/.

⁹ Afghanistan.", "People's Democratic Party of." "People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan." *Gale Library of Daily Life: Slavery in America*, Encyclopedia.com, 2018, www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/peoples-democratic-party-afghanistan.

¹⁰ "Terrorist Organizations And Networks", "the Taliban", et al. "The Taliban." Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/interactives/taliban?cid=marketing_use-taliban_infoguide-012115.

Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K or ISKP)

In 2014, IS announced the establishment of its Khorasan province, covering the territories of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics. Accordingly, an Islamic-State-branch in Afghanistan was established, the Islamic State Khorasan Province entity. Soon, Pakistani Islamist terrorist organizations that had been previously aligned with al-Qaeda—namely Tehreek-e-Khilafat Pakistan, Jundullah and the TTP’s Shahidullah faction—along with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) pledged allegiance to ISKP. This diversity within ISKP is of concern, as the group has considerable experience within its ranks of fighters, therefore the US, Russia, China, Pakistan, and Iran are preoccupied.

First, ISKP was targeted by Afghan Taliban forces, the Afghan security forces and the US military, with Russia and Iran providing arms and logistical training to the Taliban in an attempt to minimise its growth. Recently however, an improvement in relations with the Taliban has been made, enabling a series of attacks.

Afghanistan and India consider it as a breakaway faction of TTP, seeing as a Pakistani bid to make the Taliban seem like a “moderate” partner in negotiations, while Pakistan condemns India and Afghanistan supporting the TTP and ISKP act in opposition to the Pakistani regime.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

NATO has a supporting role to the Afghan government and works in close coordination with other international partners, including the UNAMA, the World Bank and the European Union. Specifically, at the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon, they signed a Declaration on Enduring Partnership which “provides a framework for long-term political consultations and practical cooperation”.¹¹

In 2001 NATO deployed the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, one of the largest coalitions and NATO’s longest and most challenging mission. Its goal was to enable the effective security and contribute in building the capacity of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), so that they took responsibility.

In 2015, Resolute Support Mission (PSM) was launched, a new non-combat NATO mission whose goal was to train, advise and assist the ANDSF. NATO Allies also helped to “sustain Afghan security forces and institutions financially, as part of a broader international commitment to Afghanistan”¹².

¹¹ NATO. “NATO and Afghanistan.” *NATO*, 10 Nov. 2017, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm.

¹² NATO. “NATO and Afghanistan.” *NATO*, 10 Nov. 2017, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm.

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Indeed, the Alliance has been cooperating with many non-member countries, such as Australia, Georgia, Jordan and Latin America, that acted as ISAF troop contributors. Additionally, many partners supported ISAF's mission through over-flight and transit rights, or through financial support for development projects.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1839-1842	First Anglo-Afghan War
1878-1880	Second Anglo-Afghan War
1919	Declaration of independence from British control.
1946	Admission of Afghanistan in the UN.
1947	Declaration of Indian independence.
1947-1991	Eruption of the Cold War.
1964	Introduction of constitutional monarchy, rise of political polarisation.
1973	Seizure of power by Mohammed Daud in a coup'etat and establishment of the Republic of Afghanistan.
1978	Revolution organised by PDPA and overthrow of Daud. Opposition is developed by US-backed mujahideen groups.
December 1979	Invasion by Soviet Army and establishment of communist government.
January 1980	Emergency Special Session on Afghanistan by the UN General Assembly.
1985	Mujahideen formation of alliance against Soviet forces.
1986	Beginning of US offers of weaponry supplies to mujahideen.
1988	Signature of peace accords between Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, the United States and Pakistan.
1989	Departure of last Soviet troops.
1992	Beginning of devastating civil war.
1996	Kabul's seizure of control by Taliban and enforcement of islamic radicalism.
1997	Recognition of Talibanas legitimate rulers by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
1999	Infliction of an air embargo and financial sanctions by UN, asking for the handing over of Bin Laden for trial.
November 2001	The UNSC invites Member States to send peacekeepers to Afghanistan.
August 2003	Take of control of Kabul's security by NATO, its first operational commitment outside Europe.

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September 2005	Afghans vote in parliamentary elections and warlords and strongmen attain most of the seats.
October 2006	NATO assumption of Afghan security responsibility and taking of command from a US-led coalition force.
August 2007	UN report for high opium production in Afghanistan.
April 2009	Sending of five thousand troops by NATO to train the Afghan security forces and of resources for provincial reconstruction.
August 2010	Departure of Dutch troops from Afghanistan.
September 2014	Efforts of the Afghan political rivals to come into agreement fail and the Taliban are making gains in the countryside.
October 2015	Bombardment of a hospital run by the NGO “Medecins Sans Frontiers” at the height of combat by the US.
December 2015	End of the NATO combat mission and replacement by an assistance mission baptised "Resolute Support".
April 2017	Prevalent Taliban presence in one a third of the country.
August 2017	Joint attacks by ISKP and the Taliban.
January 2018	Taliban battery of terror attacks in Kabul that kill more than 115 people as a response to the implementation of Trump’s plan and decision to deploy troops across rural Afghanistan, advise Afghan brigades and eliminate Taliban’s finances.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The UN involvement in the issue began in 1980, when the UN Security Council met to consider a response to the Soviet intervention in the region, but a draft resolution condemning it failed to pass, due to the negative vote of the USSR.

Since then the Assembly has maintained its focus on Afghanistan, passing resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, emergency international assistance for the reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan, destruction of cultural property and on human rights in Afghanistan.

Additionally, noteworthy resolutions on the matter include the following;

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- **Resolution 8 (1946) of 29 August** admission as Member of United Nations.
- **Resolution 622 (1988) of 31 October** authorization for UNGOMAP deployment.
- **Resolution 1076 (1996) of 22 October** demand for an end to hostilities, outside interference and supply of arms to the parties to the conflict; Denunciation of discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan.
- **Resolution 1386 (2001) of 20 December** authorization of the deployment of ISAF.
- **Resolution 1401 (2002) of 28 March** establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), a political mission that leads the UN efforts in assisting the Afghanistan.
- **Resolution 1413 (2002) of 23 May** authorization of the ISAF for a period of six months beyond 20 June.
- **Resolution 2405 (2018) of 8 March** extension of the UNAMA mandate.

Moreover, in February 2018, the UNAMA welcomed both a new Afghan penal Code that entered into force to place the country, for the first time, into compliance with international treaty obligations in criminal justice - but

removing the penalization of violence against women,¹³ and the government's renewed call for unconditional peace talks with the Taliban through platforms, expressing strong support¹⁴.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

In the past, a plethora of attempts had taken place to pacify the situation in Afghanistan. Apart from the aforementioned treaties and events, the international community has cooperated, and still keeps expressing its support, through financial and technical aid (such as over-flight and transit rights).

Specifically, as soon as the ISAF officially ended, with the ANDSF taking full responsibility for Afghan security, the NATO along with 14 partner countries, launched the RSM to help train, advise, and assist the Afghan forces, hence improving their capabilities.

Also, in 2011, Afghanistan and India signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, so that bilateral assistance programs would be implemented in the long-run. Indeed, last year both a New Development Partnership was launched, amid US President's suggestion, with India committing to 116 projects (ranging from drinking water supply projects to low cost housing, roads and polyclinics) in 31 Afghan provinces and a Motor Vehicles Agreement was signed "for the regulation of passenger, personal and cargo vehicular traffic that would pave the way for much needed overland transit"¹⁵.

Additionally, at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in 2016, representatives of 70 countries and 30 international organizations participated to build on the commitments made at the 2012 Tokyo Conference and 2014 London Conference, pledging substantial financial aid to support Afghanistan's development and goal of achieving self-reliance during its Transformation Decade (the years from 2015 to 2024).

In June 2017 Afghanistan also held a Peace Conference that brought delegates from 20 countries together, aimed to reactivate peace talks and enlist neighbours in a regional fight against terrorism, where the Afghan president underlined the necessity of an agreement on regional security.

Furthermore, in early June 2018, as the Government of Afghanistan had announced a temporary ceasefire prompted by religious events (Ramadan, the Eid-ul-Fitr holiday), the members of the UNSC urged the Taliban to reciprocate

¹³"Afghanistan: UN Mission Welcomes New Penal Code, Urges Measures to Protect Women from Violence | UN News." *United Nations*, United Nations, news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1003271.

¹⁴ "UN Mission Welcomes Afghan Government's Proposal for Peace Talks with Taliban | UN News." *United Nations*, United Nations, news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1003781.

¹⁵"India to Partner Afghanistan for 116 'High Impact' Projects." *The Economic Times*, Economic Times, 12 Sept. 2017, economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-to-partner-afghanistan-for-116-high-impact-projects/articleshow/60471645.cms.

the ceasefire. The result was that the Taliban also announced a three-day partial ceasefire, thus marking an unprecedented ceasefire in 17 years of conflict.

Finally, the UNAMA along with the broader international community support the forthcoming Afghan-led elections process through the provision of technical assistance and procurement support, while there are efforts underway organised by the Independent Election Commission (IEC), to create voting measures that prevent fraud and help protect citizen's right to vote.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In view of creating a functional, accountable, self-reliant and sustainable Afghan state, it is of dire importance to address all of its multi-dimensional issues. Particularly, terrorism, internal structural instability and foreign ideological intrusion must be, directly or implicitly, dealt with.

Terrorism, proliferation of Islamic movements and insurgency

The endorsement of dialogue and cooperation is advised in order to combat the proliferation of terrorism and insurgency. The organization of Islamic conferences and the creation of a coalition, between Muslim States, responsible for political reconciliation, constructive diplomacy, peacekeeping, security, economic and social development would be wise. Communication and coordination is the key, as counter-terrorism measures need to be implemented cohesively to be effective in such severe cases, with UN-sponsored peace talks with the Taliban being required. Also, the funding of terrorist movements calls for an international approach, with condemnation, investigation and monitoring being imperative.

Furthermore, strict border controls, in order to tackle cross-border terrorism and minimise the influx and spread of radicalism, should be brought into focus. The creation of an infertile environment, through international monitoring, for illicit trade, especially for narcotics and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), ought to be taken into account, too.

State building and development, education

It is pivotal to establish a long-term financial plan, with the assistance of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), for the country to stabilise financially and be able to involve in state-building activities, such as reconstruction, and development of national institutions. Particularly, healthcare and judicial systems, police departments, social security and education are some of the most fundamental.

Indeed, education is necessary so that free and critical thinking is developed. It is deemed essential to promote ideological awareness, through educative programs and Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGOs) campaigns, in order to clarify the meaning of democracy, extremism and religion as well as propagate different religious ideas and interpretations. Additionally, women's

education and role in socio-economic development and governance ought to be promoted and strengthened.

Corruption and electoral participation

Taking into consideration the lack of transparency in former electoral procedures, it is essential that the 2019 elections will be free, fair and participative. It is important that incentive is given to the Afghan citizens, who have been misrepresented and neglected for too long, to participate, exercise their democratic rights and decide by whom they want to be ruled. Not to mention that the opposing parties should clarify their political stance and strategies before the public reaches its consensus, so that democratic governance is fully embraced, suggestively through electoral campaigns and public debates. Delegates should ensure that the new government will not be abused, centralised or impeding the reconciliation of the political classes as well.

Territorial sovereignty

Given that the Durand Line territorial dispute has yet to be solved, delegates are advised to look for legal and satisfactory for the public, solutions. For instance, a referendum, similar to the vote that took place in 1947, after the creation of Pakistan, would allow Pashtuns on the Pakistani side of Durand Line to decide for themselves.

Reliance on foreign powers

Delegates are encouraged to advance a durable strategy that will help in the construction of an autonomous Afghan state. External forces must not become geo-political players once again in the game of Afghan sovereignty, and their support should not be given at the expense of power over the region. Sustainable political and financial aid is welcome, nonetheless, Afghanistan should gradually detach itself from it and become self-sufficient. Also, the expansion of the foreign presence, via troops, in the region should only take place in extreme situations and it is advised to be avoided.

Overall, Afghanistan ought to establish long-term sustainable partnerships with the international community, with the international approach to the Afghan embroglio having to be thoughtful and restrained. Delegates are to follow their country's policy accurately and engage in diplomatic and constructive debate.

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